

THE ROLE OF TEACHERS' SOFT SKILLS IN ENHANCING CLASSROOM EFFECTIVENESS: EVIDENCE FROM UNIVERSITY FACULTY IN PAKISTAN

MISS NAZ

PHD SCHOLAR, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION THE UNIVERSITY OF HARIPUR
EMAIL: nazyasir123@gmail.com

DR. TEHSEEN TAHIR

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF HARIPUR, PAKISTAN
EMAIL: dr.tehseen78@gmail.com/tehseen.tahir@uoh.edu.pk

DR. UMBREEN ISHFAQ

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF HARIPUR, PAKISTAN
EMAIL: umbreenishfaq@hotmail.com

Abstract

This study examined the influence of university teachers' soft skills on classroom effectiveness in the higher education context of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Using a correlational survey design, data were collected from 385 students and 357 faculty members through mirrored questionnaires measuring five dimensions of soft skills—communication, empathy, leadership, problem-solving, and teamwork—and their relationship to classroom effectiveness. Reliability analysis confirmed strong internal consistency ($\alpha = .87-.92$). Correlation results indicated that all five soft skills were positively associated with classroom effectiveness, with teamwork and leadership showing the strongest associations. Multiple regression analysis further revealed that teamwork ($\beta = .313, p < .001$) and leadership ($\beta = .259, p < .001$) were the most significant predictors, jointly accounting for over 80% of the variance in classroom effectiveness ($R^2 = .81$). These findings highlight the critical role of teachers' interpersonal and collaborative abilities in fostering effective learning environments at the university level. The study contributes empirical evidence from a Pakistani context, emphasizing the need to integrate soft skills training into faculty development programs. Limitations and directions for future research, including qualitative exploration and cross-regional comparisons, are discussed.

Keywords: soft skills, classroom effectiveness, university faculty, teamwork, leadership, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

The quality of education is not only based on subject knowledge but also impacted by several other traits that a teacher possesses. Transversal competencies known as "soft skills" are associated with thinking, behavior, learning styles, and personality factors. They might offer insights into specific individual variations or personal preferences (Creasy & Anandamela, 2013). According to Valor et al. (2020), personal styles encompass more than just personality profiles; they also comprise moral skills, beliefs, and attitudes. These capabilities comprise communication, teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, and emotional intelligence. Studies show that educators who put excellent soft skills into practice, especially communication and work ethics, achieve exceptional success levels in their job positions (Caga-Anan & Valle, 2024). Research by Hargreaves (2015) stated that educators who were highly intelligent in terms of both interpersonal and emotional intelligence have a higher chance of both professional success and favorable student assessments.

Effective classroom management creates a welcoming environment, encouraging student engagement and holistic academic success. The progressive and transformative class environment is essential to maximize student learning and is highly dependent on the strategies employed by the teacher through coupling subject knowledge and competencies with soft skills (Brockbank & McGill, 2012). Educators who possess strong soft skills foster a more inclusive and comprehensive learning atmosphere, thereby boosting students' motivation and academic success.

A balance of hard and soft skills enhances the learning environment and thus incorporating soft skills in teachers' professional development plans increases the quality of education and decreases teachers' burnout (Ulmira, 2025). In higher education, where students are expected to be autonomous and engage critically with course content, the soft skills of a teacher are essential for fostering a supportive and effective learning environment (Tang, 2020). The skills to explain complex concepts understandably, encourage critical thinking, and provide constructive feedback are crucial aspects of effective teaching. Soft skills improve teachers' capability to communicate, adjust teaching methodologies to varying learning styles, and cultivate a positive classroom atmosphere.

Soft skills have increasingly been recognized as crucial for teacher effectiveness and overall educational outcomes in South Asia. As education systems across the region grapple with challenges related to student engagement, classroom management, and the development of critical thinking skills, the importance of teachers' soft skills—such as communication, empathy, teamwork, and leadership has come to the forefront. In India, the emphasis on soft skills in teacher training has grown in response to the changing demands of the education sector. Research indicates that teachers who possess strong communication skills are better equipped to explain complex concepts, foster a positive learning environment, and address diverse student needs. These skills are particularly vital in India, where large class sizes and varied student backgrounds require teachers to be adaptable and effective communicators (Sharma & Bozkurt, 2020).

Pakistan has a dynamic socio-economic and versatile cultural profile. Students come from various backgrounds which have shaped their personalities enriched with multidimensional positive and negative attributes. For example, the potential talent and distinctive achievements in academics might have emphasized individual preference undermining the team spirit. Similarly, while together at university, students from rural areas have different norms and expectations than those from metropolitan urban centers. These circumstances present a unique challenge to the educator to deal with students in a class, maintain a healthy classroom environment, provide equal opportunity, and impart learning to get a maximum and holistic outcome of education. Relying merely on the subject knowledge and traditional approaches is not expected to bring desired results regarding the development of students and hence is likely to affect the performance of a university teacher.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province has unique challenges in higher education, such as limited resources and a diverse student background. A study suggests that academic performance and classroom management are mainly influenced by teachers who possess empathic skills (Kanwal et al., 2018). Additionally, the university faculty in KP who practice conflict resolution and teamwork generally perform better when dealing with large and heterogeneous classrooms.

This study aims to determine the effect of teachers' soft skills on their classroom effectiveness at the university level in Pakistan, particularly exploring the relationship between teachers' soft skills and classroom effectiveness. The study is an attempt to address a critical gap in existing literature by providing empirical evidence for understanding the relationship of soft skills with classroom effectiveness from the perspective of KP Province. The studies in Pakistan have focused on teachers' subject knowledge and pedagogical skills; the role of soft skills in university teaching remains less explored. There is limited evidence on how soft skills, communication, and leadership abilities influence classroom effectiveness and overall teaching performance, especially in higher education settings. This gap highlights the need to explore how teachers' soft skills contribute to effective and engaging university classrooms. The findings may guide university administrators and policymakers in designing professional development programs that strengthen soft skills, thereby enhancing classroom management, student engagement, and overall teaching effectiveness.

"The interpersonal, human, people or behavioral skills needed to apply technical abilities and knowledge in the workplace" is the definition of soft skills (Weber et al., 2010). Nowadays, employers are beginning to recognize the significance of soft skills in achieving professional success because these abilities enable individuals to operate in the current society (Fernández et al., 2021). Soft skills are dynamic, interpersonal, psychological traits that characterize a person's many modes of learning, behaving, and thinking (Georgiou et al., 2020). For the past 20 years, it has been necessary to train experts in the advancement of both competencies suitable for any occupation and a particular professional field by considering both technical (hard) and transversal (soft) competencies throughout the higher education stage (Gruzdev et al., 2018). Studies show that educators who put excellent soft skills into practice, especially communication and work ethics, achieve exceptional success levels in their job positions (Caga-Anan & Valle, 2024).

Soft skills and hard skills complement each other for effective teaching. The application of hard skills, generally acquired through formal education and training, is often evident and related to professional performance outcomes. Research shows that the importance of soft skills perception among individuals varies across academic fields; however, those who value and develop soft skills tend to be more successful (Chamorro-Premuzic et al., 2010). Since soft skills include the ability to manage oneself (intrapersonal skills) and interact with others (interpersonal skills), instructors need to possess both hard and soft skills to work at their best. Proficiency in interpersonal skills is crucial for educators. Among other things, these abilities include the capacity to establish rapport, adopt a direct approach, foster positive connections, employ diplomatic methods and strategies to diffuse difficult situations, and

employ hostile-repelling approaches. One's social and personal skills are related to soft skills. Education that emphasizes soft skills will demonstrate the capacity to interact and communicate in a social setting (Moropa et al., 2025). A teacher may communicate with pupils and enhance their competency by using soft skills.

According to Salleh et al (2010), Soft skills were the most practical instruments and methods that universities employed to evaluate the potential of both teachers and students. Teaching at universities was a complex profession that involved more than just imparting information. University teachers must be competent and develop various soft skills necessary to face the great changes that have occurred (Tang, 2020). In modern education, soft skills have become critical components of successful teaching and learning. These skills, which include communication, empathy, leadership, problem-solving, and teamwork, had a significant impact on university teachers' and students' overall educational experiences. Managing the complexity of modern education and preparing students for their future success requires critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills (Doghonadze&Zoranyan, 2021). Additionally, interpersonal and teamwork abilities were stressed, as they were becoming increasingly in demand by companies and helped graduates succeed in a diversified and global labor market. (Fernández-Arias et al., 2021). Therefore, for university instructors to fulfill the changing needs of the educational and professional environments, a thorough development of these soft skills was imperative.

At the local level, the significance of soft skills in teaching effectiveness has been identified in the context of Pakistani institutions. Teachers in higher education institutions with better communication abilities receive good student evaluations and develop a better relationship that translates to academic success (Asrar et al., 2018). A study by Saleem and Akhtar (2023) emphasized the role of soft skills as a mediator in the relationship between the abilities of the teacher and classroom performance among university instructors. The findings showed that all three variables, teaching abilities, soft skills, and classroom performance, were significantly related, and that soft skills as a mediating role between teaching skills and classroom performance. Professional development programs that cover both academic and soft skill competencies, oriented to improved pedagogical knowledge, are important in Pakistan. Students' feedback offers valuable support to improve the general pedagogy (Hussain et al., 2024). Local educational policies are now including soft skills training in teacher development programs, reflecting the significance of these skills in educational practices (Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, 2021).

In summary, soft skills play a significant role in Classroom effectiveness and educational outcomes. Teachers who effectively communicate, empathize, and build positive relationships meet students' need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, fostering a supportive and motivating environment. This support improves student engagement and academic success, which in turn positively impacts teachers' performance, job satisfaction, and professional growth.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To investigate the influence of teachers' soft skills (communication, empathy, leadership, problem-solving, and teamwork) on classroom effectiveness in Pakistani universities.
2. To determine which dimensions of teachers' soft skills, serve as the strongest predictors of classroom effectiveness.
3. To analyze differences between teachers' and students' perceptions regarding the role of soft skills in enhancing classroom effectiveness.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do teachers' soft skills (communication, empathy, leadership, problem-solving, and teamwork) influence classroom effectiveness in Pakistani universities?
2. Which dimensions of teachers' soft skills most strongly predict classroom effectiveness?
3. In what ways do teachers' and students' perceptions differ regarding the role of soft skills in enhancing classroom effectiveness?
4. How can soft skills training be integrated into faculty development programs to improve classroom effectiveness

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The following hypotheses are formulated.

H₀1: Communication skill does not significantly predict classroom effectiveness.

H₁1: Communication skill significantly predicts classroom effectiveness.

H₀2: Empathy skill does not significantly predict classroom effectiveness.

H₁2: Empathy skill significantly predicts classroom effectiveness.

H03: Leadership skill does not significantly predict classroom effectiveness.
H13: Leadership skill significantly predicts classroom effectiveness.
H04: Problem-solving skill does not significantly predict classroom effectiveness.
H14: Problem-solving skill significantly predicts classroom effectiveness.
H05: Teamwork skill does not significantly predict classroom effectiveness.
H15: Teamwork skill significantly predicts classroom effectiveness.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in the assumption that teachers' soft skills play a pivotal role in shaping classroom effectiveness at the university level. Five key dimensions of soft skills—communication, empathy, leadership, problem-solving, and teamwork—are treated as independent variables, while classroom effectiveness is considered the dependent variable. The framework posits that effective communication enhances clarity of instruction, empathy fosters supportive learning environments, leadership enables better classroom management, problem-solving skills help address academic and behavioral challenges, and teamwork strengthens collaboration between teachers and students. Collectively, these skills are expected to positively influence classroom effectiveness, measured through student engagement, active participation, and learning outcomes. Furthermore, the framework incorporates a comparative lens by examining both teachers' and students' perceptions, thereby providing a more holistic understanding of the role soft skills play in higher education. This dual-perspective approach highlights not only the predictive power of soft skills but also the alignment or divergence between how faculty members view their own competencies and how students experience them in the classroom.

THEORITICAL BACKGROUND

Self-Determination Theory supports the motivational base that explains how teachers' interpersonal abilities, like communication, empathy, problem solving, fulfill significant psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When these needs were fulfilled, teachers experienced higher intrinsic motivation, which enhanced their professional engagement and effectiveness in the classroom.

The primary goal was to determine the degree to which university instructors' soft skills influence their classroom effectiveness in public universities across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province of Pakistan. A predictive correlational research design, a quantitative method, was employed in this study. A multistage sampling method was used in this study to represent both faculty members and BS-level students from 7 public sector universities, located in 7 different divisions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Data was collected from 385 students and 357 teachers from public sector universities. Classroom effectiveness was the dependent variable, which was analyzed in terms of classroom management and academic performance.

To examine the impact of teachers' soft skills on classroom effectiveness, two separate but parallel questionnaires were developed, one for students and one for teachers. Both tools were composed of the same items, prepared to capture the perspective of respondents of the study. The use of mirrored questionnaires allowed for a comparative analysis, providing alignment between student perceptions and teacher self-perceptions, which is critical for evaluating the relational and behavioral factors. The survey used a 4-point Likert scale deliberately designed to eliminate neutrality and reduce central tendency bias. The recorded responses were analyzed in SPSS through a quantitative analysis approach. Besides descriptive analysis, correlation and regression analysis were carried out, for the data evaluation and understanding the relationship between study variables.

RESULTS

The data evaluation comprised of reliability and validity analysis, descriptive statistics, and inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analysis.

The validity of the questionnaire was witnessed by expert review. Cronbach's Alpha statistics were computed for the reliability of measurement scales. Internal consistency of all constructs was confirmed by a high Cronbach's Alpha (0.94 for students and 0.948 for teachers' data). Descriptive statistics gave an overall view of the study variables.

The correlation and regression analysis provided key insight into the research outcomes. Pearson Correlation coefficients in Table 1 & Table 2 give an examination of the relationship among study variables based on responses of students and teachers, respectively. Results show a significant positive relationship between teacher effectiveness and all dimensions of soft skills. Both teachers' and students' perspectives indicate that soft skills, including Teamwork, Problem solving, Leadership, Communication and Empathy, are strongly and positively correlated with classroom effectiveness.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1 Correlation Analysis of the study Variables (Students' Responses, N=385)

		Communicati on skill	Empathy skill	Leadership skill	Problem solving skill	Teamwork skill	Classroom_Ef fectiveness
Communicati on skill	Pearson	1	.796**	.858**	.810**	.801**	.804**
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Empathy skill	Pearson	.796**	1	.800**	.855**	.801**	.811**
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
Leadership skill	Pearson	.858**	.800**	1	.882**	.844**	.851**
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
Problem solving skill	Pearson	.810**	.855**	.882**	1	.867**	.852**
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
Teamwork skill	Pearson	.801**	.801**	.844**	.867**	1	.849**
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
Classroom_Ef fectiveness	Pearson	.804**	.811**	.851**	.852**	.849**	1
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 Correlation Analysis of the study Variables (Teachers' Responses, N=357)

		Communicati on skill	Empathy skill	Leadership skill	Problem solving skill	Team work	Classroom_Ef fectiveness
Communicati on skill	Pearson	1	.725**	.883**	.856**	.860**	.840**
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Empathy skill	Pearson	.725**	1	.676**	.724**	.721**	.725**
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
Leadership skill	Pearson	.883**	.676**	1	.900**	.905**	.868**
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
Problem solving skill	Pearson	.856**	.724**	.900**	1	.872**	.847**
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
Team work	Pearson	.860**	.721**	.905**	.872**	1	.872**
skill	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
Classroom_Ef fectiveness	Pearson	.840**	.725**	.868**	.847**	.872**	1
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The intercorrelations among the soft skills themselves are also high, suggesting that these skills are often interconnected and may contribute to classroom effectiveness.

Regression analysis was carried out to estimate the effect of predictor variables (Communication, Empathy, Leadership, Problem-solving, and Teamwork) against the dependent variable (classroom effectiveness). Each predictor variable was tested with the dependent variable by formulating respective hypotheses, and the results are evaluated and summarized in the form of histograms and tables. Tables 3 and 4 present the results of regression analysis utilizing students' and teachers' data, respectively.

Table 3 Regression Analysis to examine the effect of soft skills on classroom effectiveness (Students' responses, N=385)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.898 ^a	.807	.805	.34491

Model Summary^b

a. Predictors: (Constant), Teamwork skill, Communication skill, Empathy skill, Leadership skill, Problem-solving skill

b. Dependent Variable: Classroom_Effectiveness

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	188.761	5	37.752	317.344	.000b
	Residual	45.087	379	.119		
	Total	233.848	384			

a. Dependent Variable: Classroom_Effectiveness

b. Predictors: (Constant), Teamwork skill, Communication skill, Empathy skill, Leadership skill, Problem solving skill

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.174		2.140	.033
	Communication skill	.099	.095	1.992	.047
	Empathy skill	.159	.165	3.532	.000
	Leadership skill	.255	.251	4.396	.000
	Problem solving skill	.160	.162	2.690	.007
	Teamwork skill	.285	.289	5.817	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Classroom_Effectiveness

Table 3 shows that the overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(5, 379) = 317.344$, $p < .001$, indicating that the combination of soft skills significantly predicts classroom effectiveness. The model yielded a high R Square value of 0.807, suggesting that approximately 80.7% of the variance in classroom effectiveness is explained by the five soft skills. The Adjusted R Square was 0.805, confirming the model's strong predictive power and stability. The standard error of the estimate was 0.34491, indicating a good model fit to data.

Among the five assessed predictors:

Teamwork skill had the strongest positive and significant effect ($B = 0.285$, $\beta = 0.289$, $p < .001$), emphasizing the importance of collaboration and collegial engagement. Therefore, H5 is supported.

Leadership skill was another significant and strong predictor ($B = 0.255$, $\beta = 0.251$, $p < .001$), reaffirming its key role in improving teacher performance at the university level. Therefore, H3 is supported.

Problem-solving skill showed a positive but marginally non-significant effect ($B = 0.160$, $\beta = 0.162$, $p = .007$), indicating that while relevant, its influence may vary or be influenced by contextual factors. Therefore, H4 is supported.

Empathy skill showed a moderate and statistically significant effect ($B = 0.159$, $\beta = 0.165$, $p = .001$), suggesting that emotional understanding contributes meaningfully to classroom effectiveness. Therefore, H2 is supported.

Communication skill also had a significant influence ($B = 0.099$, $\beta = 0.095$, $p < .047$), indicating that effective expression and clarity are essential aspects of classroom effectiveness. Therefore, H1 is supported.

Table 4 Regression Analysis to examine the effect of soft skills on classroom effectiveness (Teachers' responses, $N=357$)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.904 ^a	.817	.815	.28929

a. Predictors: (Constant), Teamwork skill, Empathy skill, Communication skill, Problem solving skill, Leadership skill

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	131.390	5	26.278	313.999	.000 ^b
	Residual	29.375	351	.084		
	Total	160.765	356			

a. Dependent Variable: Classroom_Effectiveness

b. Predictors: (Constant), Team work skill, Empathy skill, Communication skill, Problem solving skill, Leadership skill

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.

		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.205	.100		-2.051	.041
	Communication skill	.156	.062	.136	2.508	.013
	Empathy skill	.158	.042	.133	3.734	.000
	Leadership skill	.272	.072	.259	3.798	.000
	Problem solving skill	.135	.061	.129	2.221	.027
	Teamwork skill	.329	.063	.313	5.262	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Classroom Effectiveness

Table 4 shows that the overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(5, 351) = 313.999$, $p < .001$, indicating that the combination of soft skills significantly predicts classroom effectiveness. The model yielded a high R Square value of 0.817, suggesting that approximately 81.7% of the variance in classroom effectiveness is explained by the five soft skills. The Adjusted R Square was 0.815, confirming the model's strong predictive power and stability. The standard error of the estimate was 0.28929, indicating a good model fit to the data.

Among the five assessed predictors:

Teamwork skill had the strongest positive and significant effect ($B = 0.329$, $\beta = 0.313$, $p < .001$), emphasizing the importance of collaboration and collegial engagement. Therefore, H5 is supported.

Leadership skill was another significant and strong predictor ($B = 0.272$, $\beta = 0.259$, $p < .001$), reaffirming its key role in improving teacher performance at the university level. Therefore, H3 is supported.

Empathy skill showed a moderate and statistically significant effect ($B = 0.158$, $\beta = 0.133$, $p = .001$), suggesting that emotional understanding contributes meaningfully to classroom effectiveness. Therefore, H2 is supported.

Communication skill also had a significant influence ($B = 0.156$, $\beta = 0.136$, $p < .013$), indicating that effective expression and clarity are essential aspects of classroom effectiveness. Therefore, H1 is supported.

Problem-solving skill showed a positive and significant effect ($B = 0.135$, $\beta = 0.129$, $p = .027$), indicating that while relevant, its influence may vary or be influenced by contextual factors. Therefore, H4 is supported.

DISCUSSION

The review of results shows that soft skills are positively correlated with classroom effectiveness. Results are in line with the findings of Saleem & Akhter (2023), who recognized the mediating role of soft skills in classroom performance of university teachers. Among the five soft skills dimensions investigated in this study, teamwork appeared as the highest-ranked soft skill, followed by leadership. This outcome was endorsed by both students and teachers, which shows the high importance of these skills in managing the classroom and improving academic performance. Similar findings illustrating the significance of teamwork and leadership in higher education have been highlighted by De Prada, E. (2022) and Ghamrawi, N. (2024). The positive correlation between soft skills and classroom effectiveness in our data is consistent with earlier evidence that soft skills mediate the link between teachers' technical competencies and observable performance. Specifically, Saleem & Akhter (2023) reported that university teachers' soft skills significantly transmit the effect of teaching competencies to classroom outcomes, reinforcing our mediation-based interpretation.

Within the five dimensions we tested, teamwork emerged as the top-ranked attribute (with leadership close behind). This pattern mirrors recent higher-education research showing that effective teamwork underpins engagement, learning gains, and professional behaviors students' value and reward in their instructors—especially when teamwork is deliberately structured and assessed. Reviews and empirical studies from 2024–2025 highlight that (a) well-designed team processes improve learning and satisfaction, (b) explicit teamwork assessment increases accountability and contribution quality, and (c) digital/hybrid settings can strengthen or weaken teamwork depending on design fidelity (Gul, R., & Khan, S. S. 2021). These mechanisms help explain why students and teachers in our study converged on teamwork's importance.

Two adjacent strands of current literature strengthen the practical takeaway. First, microlearning interventions can measurably build soft skills (e.g., communication, collaboration) among university learners, suggesting that compact, practice-embedded formats could be repurposed for faculty development in teamwork and leadership. Second, sector-wide analyses continue to show strong employer demand for collaboration and communication, underscoring the salience of these skills for graduate outcomes and giving institutions an external incentive to privilege them in teaching practice.

Overall, the weight of recent evidence supports our conclusion that teamwork and leadership are not merely desirable dispositions but high-leverage, teachable competencies that translate into better-run classrooms and stronger academic performance. For policy and practice, this implies (i) embedding structured team-teaching and peer-observation cycles, (ii) assessing teamwork explicitly (rubrics, peer/360 inputs) to reinforce desired behaviors, and (iii) offering short, microlearning-style leadership modules focused on feedback, conflict

resolution, and psychological safety in classes and teaching teams. These steps are directly actionable and line up with the most current research base cited above.

CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

The study aimed to investigate the impact of teachers' soft skills on classroom effectiveness at the university level. Communication, Empathy, Leadership, problem-solving, and Teamwork were key skills evaluated by both teachers and students. Results revealed that the soft skills of teachers are an important pillar of classroom effectiveness in higher education settings. Teachers with teamwork and leadership abilities are likely to perform better in the classroom, which implies a progressive and well-managed classroom environment and better academic success (Salameh, A. A., Akhtar, H., & Gul, R. 2022).

Practically, the findings carry important implications for faculty development and educational policy. Universities may prioritize training programs that strengthen teachers' leadership, teamwork, and communication skills. Policy reforms may integrate soft skills training into teacher education and continuous professional development. Appraisal systems may include indicators of communication, empathy, leadership, problem-solving, and teamwork, rather than focusing only on subject knowledge. Recruitment practices may also evaluate soft skills through interviews, teaching demonstrations, and behavioral assessments to ensure the selection of faculty capable of fostering effective learning environments (Zhou G, Gul R and Tufail M, 2022). Data was collected only from public sector universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which may limit generalizability to other regions or private institutions. In addition, the study data mainly derives from perceptions of respondents, which were quantitatively analyzed. Future research may replicate this study with larger, more diverse samples, and consider longitudinal or mixed methods designs to better capture the dynamics of soft skills, and teacher performance in the classroom.

REFERENCES

1. Ahmad, I., **Gul, R.** & Zeb, M. (2022). A Qualitative Inquiry of University Student's Experiences of Exam Stress and Its Effect on Their Academic Performance. *Hu Arenas*). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42087-022-00285-8>.
2. Ahmad, I., **Gul, R.** Impact of Online Service-Learning on Civic and Social Justice Behavior
3. Ahmad, I., **Gul, R.**, Kashif, M. (2022). A Qualitative Study of Workplace Factors Causing Stress Among University Teachers and Coping Strategies. A Qualitative Study of Workplace Factors. *Human Arena. Hu Arenas* <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42087-022-00302-w>
4. Ali, I., **Gul, R.**, Khan, S. S., Karim, K. (2021). An Evaluative Study of English Contrastive Rhetoric in Pashtu Speaking Areas of Pakistan: A Case Study of District Swat. *LINGUISTICA ANTVERPIENSIA*, Issue-1. PP. 2183 – 2203.
5. Asrar, Z., Tariq, N., & Rashid, H. (2018). Impact of communication between teachers and students: A case study of the Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Karachi. *European Scientific Journal*, 14(16), 32. <https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2018.v14n16p32>
6. Ayub, A., **Gul, R.**, Ali, A., Rauf, B., M. (2021). Cultural and Educational Stress: A Case Study of Brahui Speaking ESL and EMI Periphery Students. *Asian EFL Journal*. 28(2.3). <https://www.asian-efl-journal.com/monthly-editions-new/2021-monthly-edition/volume-issue-2-3-april-2021/>.
7. Batool, S., Tahir. T, Habib M. (2018). Relationship of teachers' professional competence and achievement of students at university level, *Turkish Journal of Teacher Education* 7(1), 50-60.
8. Batool, S., Tahir. T., Gul, R., Ishfaq, U. (2021). Attribution Styles of Deaf Children: Application Of Weiner Theory. *Webology*, 18 (3).
9. Bozkurt, A., & Sharma, R. C. (2020). Emergency remote teaching in a time of global crisis due to CoronaVirus pandemic. *Asian journal of distance education*, 15(1), i-vi.
10. Brockbank, A., & McGill, I. (2012). *Facilitating reflective learning: Coaching, mentoring and supervision* (2nd ed.). London, UK: McGraw-Hill Education.
11. Bukhari, S, K, S.; Said, Hamdan; **Gul, R**; Seraj, P, M, I. (2021). Barriers to sustainability at Pakistan public universities and the way forward. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education* . doi.org/10.1108/IJSHE-09-2020-0352.
12. Bukhari, S. K. U. S., **Gul, R.**, Bashir, T., Zakir, S., & Javed, T. (2021). Exploring managerial skills of Pakistan Public Universities (PPUs)' middle managers for campus sustainability. *Journal of Sustainable Finance & Investment*, 1-19. doi: 10.1080/20430795.2021.1883985.
13. Business Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs in Public & Private Television Advertisements in Pakistan. *Industrial Engineering & Management Systems*, 20 (2): pp.140-147. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7232/iems.2021.20.2.140>.

14. Caga-Anan, M. P., & Valle, A. M. (2024). Teachers' soft skills practices and performance. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Analysis*, 7(6), 2453–2462. <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijmra/v7-i06-05>
15. Chamorro-Premuzic, T., Arceche, A., Bremner, A. J., Greven, C., & Furnham, A. (2010). Soft skills in higher education: Importance and improvement ratings as a function of individual differences and academic performance. *Educational Psychology*, 30(2), 221–241. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410903560278>
16. Creasy, T., & Anantatmula, V. (2013). From every direction—How personality traits and dimensions of project managers can conceptually affect project success. *Project Management Journal*, 44(6), 36–51. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pmj.21372>
17. De Prada, E., Mareque, M., & Pino-Juste, M. (2022). Teamwork skills in higher education: Is university training contributing to their mastery? *Psicologia: Reflexão e Crítica*, 35, Article 5. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41155-022-00207-1>
18. Doghonadze, N., & Zoranyan, M. (2021). Development of soft skills while teaching English to Master's students. *Journal of Education in Black Sea Region*, 6(2), 137-147.
19. Exploring the Impact of Teachers Intelligence on Teaching Pedagogies of Secondary School Science Teachers. *Multicultural Education*, 7(3). doi: 10.5281/zenodo.4647944.
20. Fernández-Arias, P., Antón-Sancho, Á., Vergara, D., & Barrientos, A. (2021). Soft skills of American university teachers: Self-concept. *Sustainability*, 13(22), 12397. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132212397>
21. Georgiou, G., Guo, K., Naveenkumar, N., Vieira, A., & Das, J. (2020). PASS theory of intelligence and academic achievement: A meta-analytic review. *Intelligence*, 79, 101431. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intell.2020.101431>
22. Ghamrawi, N., Abu-Shawish, R. K., Shal, T., & Ghamrawi, N. A. R. (2024). Teacher leadership in higher education: Why not? *International Journal of Educational Leadership and Management*, 12(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2366679>
23. Gruzdev, M., Kuznetsova, I., Tarkhanova, I., et al. (2018). University graduates' soft skills: The employers' opinion. *European Journal of Contemporary Education*, 7(4), 690–698. <https://doi.org/10.13187/ejced.2018.4.690>
24. Gul, R., & Khan, S. S. (2021). Influence of Logical and Spatial Intelligence on Teaching Pedagogies of Secondary School Teachers. *Humanities and Social Sciences Reviews*, 8(6), 1–9.18.
25. Gul, N., Tahir, T., Gul, R., Batool, S. (2022). Investigating Teachers' Knowledge About a Dyslexia: A Study At Primary School Level. *International Journal of Early Childhood*
26. Gul, N., Tahir, T., Gul, R., Batool, S. (2022). Investigating Teachers' Knowledge About Dyslexia: A Study At Primary School Level. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education*. Vol 14, Issue 03.
27. Gul, R., & Tahir, T. (2023). Impact of Teachers' Workload on Their Time Management Skills at the University Level. *Journal of Social Sciences Review*, 3(1), 322–334.21.
28. Gul, R., & Tahir, T. (2023). Perspectives of the Teachers on Challenges and Possibilities to Online System of Education Amid COVID-19 Outbreak in Balochistan, Pakistan. *SAGE Open*, 13(1), 21582440231155063.
29. Gul, R., Ahmad, I., Tahir, T., Ishfaq, U. (2022). Development and factor analysis of an instrument to measure service-learning management. *Heliyon*, Volume 8, Issue 4. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e09205>
30. Gul, R., Ayub, A., Mazhar, S., Uddin, S., S., Khanum, M. (2021). Teachers' Perceptions on
31. Students' Cultural and Linguistic Diversity and its impact on their Approaches towards Culturally Teaching Practices. *TESOL International Journal*, 16 (3.2).
32. Gul, R., Khilji, G. (2021). Exploring the need for a responsive school curriculum to cope with
33. the Covid-19 pandemic in Pakistan. *Prospects*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-020-09540-8>. Link: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/228237475.pdf>.
34. Gul, R., Tahir, T., Ishfaq, U. (2022). Perspectives of the Teachers on Challenges, and
35. Possibilities to Online System of Education amid COVID-19 Outbreak in Balochistan, Pakistan, Sage-open. January-March 2023: 1–14. DOI: [10.1177/21582440231155063](https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231155063)
36. Gul, R., Tahir, T., Ishfaq, U., Batool, T. (2021). Impact of Teachers Workload on their Time 49. Management Skills at University Level. *Indian Journal of Economics and. Business*.20(3). 51.
37. Gul, R., Talat, M., Mumtaz, M., & Shaheen, L. (2021, March). *Does intelligence matter in*
38. *teaching? Exploring the impact of teachers' intelligence on teaching pedagogies of secondary school science teachers. Multicultural Education* (Vol. 7, Issue 3).
39. Gul, R., Zakir, S., Ali, I., Karim, H., Hussain, R. (2021). The Impact of Education on
40. Business Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs in Public& Private Television Advertisements in Pakistan. *Industrial Engineering & Management Systems*, 20 (2): pp.140-147DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7232/iems.2021.20.2.140>
41. Hargreaves, A. (2015). The emotional geographies of teaching. *Teachers College Record*, 103(6), 1056-1080.

42. Hussain, W., Bibi, R., & Batool, Z. (2024). An analysis of professional development skills at higher education level. *Journal of Development and Social Sciences*, 5(4), 144–153. [https://doi.org/10.47205/jdss.2024\(5-IV\)09](https://doi.org/10.47205/jdss.2024(5-IV)09)
43. Kanwal, S., Sohail, M., & Inamullah, H. M. (2018). Emotional intelligence of lecturers and its impact on teaching effectiveness at public universities of Peshawar. *Global Regional Review*, III(I), 415–427. [https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2018\(III-I\).31](https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2018(III-I).31)
44. Khan, H., Gul, R., & Zeb, M. (2023). The Effect of Students' Cognitive and Emotional
45. Engagement on Students' Academic Success and Academic Productivity. *Journal of Social Sciences Review*, 3(1), 322-334.
46. Moropa, T. D., Matshaka, L., & Makhene, A. (2025). Enhancing effective interpersonal interactions through soft skills: Perceptions of nurse educators. *BMC Nursing*, 24(380). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-025-02864-w>
47. Rani Gul, Iqbal Ahmad & Muhammad Tufail (2023) Understanding the Pedagogical Role of
48. Service-Learning for Preparing Citizen Leaders in Higher Education, *Africa Education Review*, 19:2, 25-39, DOI: [10.1080/18146627.2023.2225751](https://doi.org/10.1080/18146627.2023.2225751).
49. Salameh, A. A., Akhtar, H., & Gul, R. (2022, July). *Personality traits and entrepreneurial intentions: Financial risk-taking as mediator* *Front. Psychol.* 13:927718. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.927718
51. Saleem, A., & Akhtar, Z. (2023). Teaching competencies and classroom performance of university teachers: Soft skills as a mediator. *VFAST Transactions on Education and Social Sciences*, 11(1), 116–123. <https://doi.org/10.21015/vtess.v11i1.1437>
52. Salleh, K. M., Sulaiman, N. L., & Talib, K. N. (2010, November). Globalization's impact on soft skills demand in the Malaysian workforce and organizations: What makes graduates employable. In *Proceedings of the 1st UPI International Conference on Technical and Vocational Education and Training* (pp. 10-11).
53. Tahir, T. Batool, S, Gul, R, Ishfaq, U(2023). Relationship between self-concept and academic achievement: an evidence of female students. *Russian Law Journal*, 11 (5s). 11-23
54. Tahir, T, Khan, K, Aurangzeb, W(2019) Effective use of classroom management techniques in overcrowded classrooms, *Global Social Sciences Review* 4(1) 137-144
55. Tang, K. N. (2020). The importance of soft skills acquisition by teachers in higher education institutions. *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*, 41(1), 22-27.
56. Tufail, M., Khan, S., Gul, R. (2022). Servant Leadership and Knowledge Hiding: The
57. Moderating Role of Personality Traits in Academic Settings. *International Review of Basic and Applied Sciences*. Vol. 2(2).
58. Ulmira, Y. (2025). The interplay of hard and soft skills in enhancing teacher effectiveness and student development. *Universum: Психология и Образование*, 2(4[130]), 21–26.
59. Valor, C., Antonetti, P., & Merino, A. (2020). The relationship between moral competences and sustainable consumption among higher education students. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 248, Article 119161. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.119161>
60. Weber, M. R., Crawford, A., Rivera Jr, D., & Finley, D. A. (2010). Using Delphi panels to assess soft skill competencies in entry level managers. *Journal of Tourism Insights*, 1(1), 12.
61. Zhou G, Gul R and Tufail M (2022) Does Servant Leadership Stimulate Work Engagement? The Moderating Role of Trust in the Leader. *Front. Psychol.* 13:925732. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.925732